

### **REMARKS**

Pursuant to the non-final Office Action mailed November 14, 2006, which has been carefully considered, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. To further the prosecution of this application, each of the issues raised in the Office Action is addressed herein.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-22, 24, and 26-30 are currently pending in this application, of which Claims 1, 10, and 18 are independent claims. By this Amendment, Claims 5, 7, 23, 25, 31, and 32 have been cancelled, and Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 17, 18, 24, and 26 have been amended, primarily to accept subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. The application as now presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

A. **Unrelated Information Disclosure Statement and Preliminary Amendment**

The Information Disclosure Statement submitted on November 8, 2004, which was not considered by the Examiner, was submitted in error by an unrelated Applicant. Similarly, the Preliminary Amendments submitted on November 19, 2004 and November 22, 2004, which were not considered by the Examiner, were also submitted in error by the unrelated Applicant.

B. **Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112**

Claim 17 was rejected as being indefinite. Accordingly, Claim 17 has been amended to depend from Claim 10 rather than Claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

C. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that at page 16 of the Office Action, Claims 5, 6, 10-14, and 25-28 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, while not acceding to the propriety of any claim rejections over prior art set forth in the Office Action, Applicants have rewritten Claims 1, 10, and 18 to accept subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner to expedite prosecution of this application to allowance.

For example, independent Claim 1 has been rewritten to incorporate the subject matter of dependent Claim 5, which was indicated as allowable, and Claim 5 has been cancelled. Thus, Claims 1-4, 6, 15 and 16 are in condition for allowance. Similarly, Claim 10 has been rewritten to incorporate the subject matter of dependent Claims 7 and 10, which was indicated as allowable, and Claim 7 was cancelled, thus, Claims 8-14, and 17 are in condition for allowance. Likewise, Claim 18 has been written to incorporate the subject matter of dependent Claims 23 and 25, which was indicated as allowable, and Claims 23 and 25 were cancelled. Thus, Claims 18-22, 24, and 26-30 are now in condition for allowance.

D. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-4, 17, 18, and 31 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2002/0122230 to Izadpanah et al. (*Izadpanah*).

The rejection of Claims 1, 18, and 31 and those claims depending therefrom has been rendered moot by amendments to Claims 1 and 18 and cancellation of Claim 31 submitted herewith. These amendments were solely made to expedite prosecution of this application to allowance by accepting subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Applicants do not concede that the foregoing rejections are proper and reserve the right to file one or more related applications directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to the amendments herein.

E. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 7, 19-23 and 32 were rejected as being obvious over *Izadpanah*; Claims 8, 9, and 24 were rejected as being obvious over *Izadpanah* in view of U.S. Publication No. 2003/0010891 to Mizuhara et al.; and Claims 15, 16, 29, and 30 were rejected as being obvious over *Izadpanah* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,585,953 to Zavrel et al.

It is submitted that these rejections are also rendered moot by the amendments herein.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 2-4, 6, 15, and 16, which depend from Claim 1, Claims 8, 9, 11-14, and 17, which ultimately depend from Claim 10, and Claims 19-22, 24, and 26-30, which ultimately depend from Claim 18, are patentable over the art of record by virtue of their dependence. Further, Applicants submit that Claims 2-4, 6, 8, 9, 11-17, 19-22, 24, and 26-30 define patentable subject matter in their own right. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1-4, 17, 18, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and the rejection of Claims 7-9, 15, 16, 19-24, 29, 30, and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

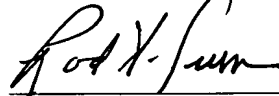
Entry of the amendments to Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 17, 18, 24, and 26; favorable consideration of Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 17-18, 24, and 26, as amended; favorable reconsideration of Claims 2-4, 9, 11-16, 19-22, and 27-30; and allowance of pending Claims 1-4, 6, 8-22, 24, and 26-30 are solicited.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the

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Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number provided below to discuss any outstanding issues relating to the allowability of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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Rod S. Turner  
Registration No.: 38,639  
Attorney for Applicants

HOFFMANN & BARON, LLP  
6900 Jericho Turnpike  
Syosset, New York 11791  
(516) 822-3550  
RST:jp